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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 007358

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#) [FARC](#) [ELN](#)

SUBJECT: GOC POSES NEGOTIATION OFFERS TO GUERRILLAS

Classified By: Charge Milton K. Drucker; reasons 1.4
(b) and (d)

Summary

1. (SBU) In mid-June and July, the GOC sent several communiques in an attempt to resuscitate negotiation processes with both the National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The GOC hoped to restart preliminary peace negotiations with the ELN with the help of a third party, four months after the ELN ended the Mexican facilitation process. With the FARC, the GOC aimed to secure a prisoner exchange to free the sixty-three political hostages held by the FARC (including the three American prisoners). The ELN response repeated standard complaints against the government and claimed that a peace process would be "difficult." The FARC refused the GOC's offer and called for an investigation into the legality of the Simon Trinidad and Sonia extraditions. End summary.

ELN Peace Negotiation Offer

2. (U) In the first attempt to resuscitate peace talks with the ELN since April, the Colombian government offered the National Liberation Army (ELN) another opportunity for mediated discussion on June 12. The offer was lightly rebuffed on July 24 and became public. Restrepo sent three messages to the ELN leadership (COCE), the latest on July 30, suggesting that the ELN and GOC establish a working group abroad to negotiate a ceasefire. The ELN terminated talks in April after months of impasse over the ELN's unwillingness to suspend kidnappings during talks abroad. In July, Spain's former Prime Minister Francisco Gonzalez offered to serve as a mediator, but neither the ELN nor GOC accepted the offer. The GOC's offer remained confidential until July 24 to allow the ELN to consider the terms away from public scrutiny.

Begin unofficial translation of ELN Communique:

Open Letter: Answer to the Government on the Dialogue Proposal

The majority of Colombians long for peace with social justice, the democratization of the country, and a move towards necessary transformations of the state. The state should guarantee all people a future of well-being and opportunities to exercise at will.

After these three long years, the current government has applied a strategy of denying the existence of internal conflict, rooted in social, economic, and political problems.

The fact that it has moved ahead with a so-called negotiation with the paramilitaries, the primary state instrument of genocide realized in Colombia, does not mean that the current government has an interest in peace. Instead, it has a policy of favoring those who have carried out aberrant crimes against the humble, unprotected citizens of Colombia for decades. To that end, the Government has demonstrated over time that it favors victimizers while victims are left forgotten forever, and hunted.

To have a real interest in peace implies siding with the unprotected. But this government prioritizes the production of laws that favor the victimizers and neglects the drama of millions of displaced people and the other havoc that makes up the Dante-esque universe dubbed "humanitarian crisis" by the government.

The denial of internal conflict, favoring the paramilitaries and failing to resolve the humanitarian crisis proves to the nation and to the world that the government does not have an interest in peace. Therefore the ELN, knowing the necessity of searching for peace, has reviewed its proposals carefully and deems it difficult to consider the possibility of opening dialogue with the government.

We know that many sectors stand ready to support a peace process in which they could be active, not mute, participants. Like us, they believe that the nation has been put upon by the conflict and can only be rebuilt with

everyone's participation.

We resolve that the offer to establish a viable peace process is not in our hands. For us, peace is not the demobilization and disarmament of the insurgency, but rather that it allows us to overcome the causes that drove us to war in the first place. Expressing our thinking clearly is our best contribution towards the exploration of constructing a path towards peace.

Central Command
National Liberation Army
Mountains of Colombia
July 24

End text and translation.

Humanitarian Exchange Proposal to the FARC

12. (U) On July 26, GOC officials offered to restart negotiations for a prisoner swap or "humanitarian exchange" with the FARC. In the latest proposal, the GOC maintained that it would not consider a demilitarized zone, but eliminated the ceasefire pre-requisite. The FARC replied on August 3 that it would only consider an exchange within a demilitarized zone, and separately asked the Inspector General, Edgardo Maya, to investigate whether the extraditions of FARC leaders Simon Trinidad and Sonia were legal.

13. (C) With GOC concurrence, the French, via a retired consul, recently met with the FARC to discuss a humanitarian exchange. French Ambassador Camil Rohou told the Ambassador on July 30 that he was not optimistic but Paris wanted to try one more time. He suggested that he was not aware of all the details of the French initiative, and complained that the Catholic Church and two ex-presidents (Samper and Lopez) were re-engaging on the topic, which could lead to confusion. He has organized a meeting with these parties to ensure the proliferation of channels were coordinated in some way. After meeting the French envoy, the FARC announced it had unilaterally freed Duverney Orozco, a soldier taken hostage during the June 26 Teteye attacks. The FARC claimed that liberating Orozco was a gesture of good will and it hoped the Colombian government would reciprocate.

14. (C) Comment: If the ELN agreed to negotiate or the FARC authorized a swap, Uribe's political credibility would only increase. Critics who contend that Uribe is only interested in a paramilitary peace process would be proved wrong. On the other hand, the perception of flexibility by the FARC and/or ELN could enhance their stature with the international community. ELN leadership remains divided on whether to participate in a meaningful peace agreement, hence the lack of any real response. Some evidence indicates that members of the ELN leadership are cooperating closely with the FARC, which has no interest in improving Uribe's stature by working with him. The FARC's repeated demands to include Simon Trinidad and Sonia, both extradited to the United States, may now be negotiable but its insistence that the GOC create a new, two-municipality "demilitarized zone" makes an exchange less likely. End comment.

DRUCKER